

# TALLADEGA COUNTY

## Honorable George N. Sims

Talladega County Courthouse  
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Sylacauga, AL 35150  
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## PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All children will have access to a significant adult in their lives
2. Children and families will have access to the resources necessary for self-sufficiency, health and independence
3. Every child should enter school prepared to learn what is taught in school

# Issues

*Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county.*

## **Health - Children's (0 - 19)** physical and mental well-being in the county.

### **Access to physical and mental health and dental care**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- development and implementation of comprehensive management system to assure that each child is able to be physically and mentally well
- establishment of free dental clinic with Talladega County Health Department
- Work with local mental health providers to try to get services in a timelier manner
- development and implementation for the education, outreach and navigation of the system's health programs for the uninsured and the underinsured
- continue to promote enrollment in the CHIP program
- development of a county resource committee to act as a safety net for children

### **Teen pregnancy**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- development program for professionals in the community to go into schools to teach abstinence, making correct life choices, prevention and consequences
- every school system have a school nurse and social worker
- expand programs offered through the Talladega County Health Department with the addition of a Community Development Specialist
- expand and support the Fatherhood Initiative Parenting Intervention and health care initiative programs

## **Chronic disease in children: diabetes, asthma, hypertension and depression**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- identify a network of referral resources for education and support of families with children who have chronic diseases
- utilize the Parish Nurse Program for support of children with chronic diseases
- parent education in elementary schools to prevent diabetes and hypertension

## **Safety - Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.**

### **Ineffective parental involvement regarding safety of children**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- identification of existing problems, which have a component regarding parental responsibility
- modify existing problems to include model on "how to raise your children"
- insure the development of support services such as child care, transportation, and accessible times for parental participation in the parenting classes
- identify and require participation by parents when children are involved with Juvenile system, DHR, or other agency referrals
- provide local publicity through newspaper and agency referrals for the availability of the parental programs
- develop companion services for parents needing these such as drug treatment financial planning, etc.

### **Safe communities**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- work with the judicial process such that criminal offenders where safety of families is issue are processed quickly
- require family participation in all activities required by the court
- advocate for strict enforcement of sentencing

## Education - Children

learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

### High school graduation

Policy Council Action Steps:

- support the State Department of Education "Recommended Policies and Procedures for Court /School Truancy Prevention and Conduct Intervention" as revised by the local school systems
- develop and implement a court/school intervention program to include representatives from the Children's Policy Council (Juvenile Court, District Attorney's Office, Family Service Centers, DHR, Mental health, Health Department) to participate in the Early Warning Program provided by the Juvenile Court

### Alternative education programs

Policy Council Action Steps:

- develop and implement a process whereby contact information for all school leavers or non-completers is submitted to the Director of Adult Education by each local school system. A reasonable effort will be made by the Adult Education Program to enroll each student. Follow-up data concerning enrollment in adult education or employment training will be maintained by the Director of Adult Education

## Early Care and

## Education - Children

(0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

### Language and literacy

Policy Council Action Steps:

- encourage childcare providers to select curriculum rich in language experiences and vocabulary development appropriate to infant, toddler and pre-school age groups
- distribute language-development information targeted to parents and the general public to enable adults to assist children in building language skills and becoming school ready
- support efforts by Child Care Central to continue offering training to childcare providers and parents in appropriate school readiness language activities and curriculum
- advocate for additional state and federal quality enhancement funding
- advocate for additional funding for child care subsidy and Pre-K programs

### Disruptive behavior

Policy Council Action Steps:

- partner with the Alabama Department of Mental Health and Cheaha Mental Health to develop a system for referrals for children in childcare to professional mental health services
- educate stakeholders on the correlation between children's mental health, school readiness and success in school
- advocate for mental health services for children 0 to 5 years of age

## School readiness

Policy Council Action Steps:

- advocate for universal State sponsored Pre-K programs
- support efforts by Child Care Central to continue offering training to child care providers on successful "school readiness" models, curriculum, and outcome based planning for early care and education
- advocate for and partner in all efforts to secure funding for programs such as HIPPIY, Parents as Teachers, Head Start, subsidized child care, Pre-K, and other programs serving children 0 to 5
- advocate for additional state and federal funding for programs that promote school readiness for children 0 to 5

## Economic Security

- Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

### Parenting skills

Policy Council Action Steps:

- expand existing programs such as SAFE Family Services Center, FIRST Family Service Center, Child Care, Head Start, and Children's Rehabilitation Services providing family and parenting support
- develop parenting support programs within target areas such as Talladega Housing Authority and the Sylacauga housing Authority residence communities
- promote the important role of the parent in a child's life through an advocacy campaign to target adequate state funding

### Life skills

Policy Council Action Steps:

- create and distribute informational brochures about community resources related to access to GED, Adult Education and Life Skills training and support programs
- expand existing literacy efforts such as Imagination Library, Reading Is Fundamental, Even Start, Home Instruction Program for parents of Preschool Youngsters and Parents As Teachers
- expand services for adult and family literacy programs to non-traditional hours that are family friendly

### Life skills

Policy Council Action Steps:

- continue collaboration across systems specifically Post Secondary education and community-based agencies to provide comprehensive job readiness training programs targeting low literacy adults
- continue the development of career specific training for high school students through business and industry collaborative
- provide resources to enhance the role of school guidance counselors in supporting transitions into the workplace for struggling students specifically in developing alternatives to school drop-out

## Parent Involvement and Skills - Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

### Employability skills (job skills and work ethic)

Policy Council Action Steps:

- create working relationship and partner with community businesses to commit to goal of becoming "family friendly"
- business and community leaders should become committed to improving the lives of children
- promote jobs for school age children to train for entering the workplace
- need for more caregivers for children and adults in need of caretakers to free up employees and potential employees

### Adult illiteracy

Policy Council Action Steps:

- create greater availability of Adult Education programs
- expand business coalition to promote participation of employees in literacy programs

## Policy Recommendation

1. Development of early care and education curriculum guidelines with emphasis on outcomes which encompass language, literacy and school readiness.
2. Development of State mental health system of referral and intervention for children ages 0 to 5.
3. Acknowledge that providing quality care and education programs for ages 0 to 5 is less costly and more effective than rehabilitating adolescents with regard to both monetary and social impact.
4. Truancy prevention/intervention: school/court truancy and Conduct Early Warning Program, School Social Workers, additional nurses, additional school counselors for at-risk students, expand Family Service Centers, flexibility in use of state funds.
5. Alternative Education Programs: Expand innovative alternative education opportunities for academic and behavioral needs.
6. Support and expand the Family Service Centers.
7. State agencies should work in a collaborative manner in the coordination of resources and funding that are available at the local and county levels to deliver these resources that are driven by the ability of that county/community to demonstrate the capacity for collaboration and partnership.
8. Provide adequate and/or increased funding for programs such as: Subsidized child care, Universal Pre-K, Medicaid, Education, School Social Workers in every school, Job Readiness Training programs, parenting programs, prevention programs, early intervention programs after school programs, public/rural transportation programs, and job access reverse commute programs (JARC).
9. Parental responsibility programs will be required in all juvenile programs.
10. Advocacy for speedy judicial process.